



**Testimony of the Rockville Mayor and Council  
Board of Education Boundaries and Facilities Hearing  
Superintendent's Proposed FY15 Capital Budget and the  
FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program  
November 14, 2013**

Good evening President Barclay and members of the Board. I am Bridget Donnell Newton, Mayor Elect of Rockville, and I want to thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Superintendent's Proposed FY15 Capital Budget and the FY 15-20 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Councilmember Tom Moore and I are here to testify in strong support of the recommended capital budget, with a few requested amendments.

The Rockville Mayor and Council and residents place a high priority on securing critical funding for MCPS capital projects in Rockville's Schools. High quality public schools are the foundation of our flourishing neighborhoods, and in tandem with our premium services, make Rockville a place our residents are proud to call home. We share a common vision with MCPS that our children receive an outstanding education in spacious and modern facilities.

MCPS students comprise 17% of the State school population, but it only receives about 11 percent of the State's school construction resources. Swift action is needed to address this inequity. We strongly support the joint initiative of County, school and State officials to seek an additional \$20 million annual State investment matched by \$40 million in County funds that would leverage \$750 million in bonding capacity for MCPS capital projects. In the 2014 Session, the City will work with the MML Montgomery Chapter, of which I am President, in support of

increased State school construction dollars for MCPS. We stand ready to partner Attachment - F  
with you to build a strong coalition of support and successfully advance this  
package in Annapolis.

Turning attention to schools that serve Rockville residents, the most severe overcrowding conditions persist in the Richard Montgomery Cluster. The average elementary school utilization rate from 2013 through 2016 is 123%. In 2014, three elementary schools have staggering enrollment figures: Beall is projected to exceed capacity by 190 seats, College Gardens by 171 seats, and Ritchie Park by 159 seats. As a result, it is essential that the new Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 is built to the originally planned program capacity of 740 students. Given the current scarcity of resources and high demand for projects, we have only one chance to build a school that will allow MCPS to continue to provide the quality education that our families value. Any savings achieved by an insufficient 602 student program capacity will be far outweighed by the greater cost of a future expansion and additional students learning in portables. It was only two and a half years after the new College Gardens Elementary school opened that portables were added.

Rockville is greatly appreciative of the Superintendent's recommendation to keep the new Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 on schedule to open in August of 2017. The City fully supports the recommended FY15 appropriation that will allow architectural design to begin. It is absolutely imperative for the current project schedule to stay on track. It is equally important that there be no delays in the County's construction of a new Children's Resource Center on the Broome School site. This project must proceed as quickly as possible in order for the new elementary school to open on schedule.

Overcrowding at Julius West Middle School is increasing steadily, as the student population bulge hits this facility. By 2016, Julius West will exceed capacity by

190 seats. As the sole middle school in the Richard Montgomery Cluster, Julius West is a critical link. The City greatly appreciates the Superintendent's recommendation to keep the project on the scheduled completion date of August 2016. Rockville fully supports the FY15 recommended appropriation to begin the construction of the building addition. We can't emphasize enough how critical it is for this project to proceed without delay.

Good evening. My name is Tom Moore. I am a member of the Rockville City Council, and I am a parent with six children in MCPS schools, from Alexander in second grade to Katie in eleventh grade.

The City is very concerned about the delay of the Twinbrook Elementary School revitalization and expansion until 2022. This 52-year-old building has deteriorated to the point that it is falling apart. MCPS ranks it as having some of the worst physical conditions in the County.

Twinbrook Elementary's students face steep socioeconomic challenges. These kids count on you to provide them a safe and secure environment. Twinbrook's students and staff should not have to endure crumbling conditions for nine more years. We urge the Board to complete the Twinbrook Elementary revitalization project by 2021.

The Rockville Cluster is also plagued with significant overcrowding issues. We are concerned with the recommendation to remove the Meadow Hall Elementary School classroom addition to another CIP. For the foreseeable future, Meadow Hall will be at 125% of capacity; yet, if this recommendation is followed, there is no programmed response at all. The City urges you to include the addition in the FY15-20 CIP.

Lucy V. Barnsley Elementary School serves a large number of City of Rockville students enrolled in its special programs, including my daughter Elsa. Current- and near-term projections are at 160% of capacity. I can personally attest that this school is bursting at the seams. The City of Rockville strongly supports the 2017 addition completion date, and the FY15 recommended appropriation to begin the architectural design.

The City of Rockville is also aware of the growth and overcrowding in the Gaithersburg Cluster, which serves the northern part of the City's King Farm neighborhood. The City supports the comprehensive elementary-school capacity study in this Cluster to be conducted in the current school year.

We have spoken to you tonight about the City of Rockville's most pressing concerns. But we understand that enormous enrollment growth and intense budget pressures are felt everywhere. We realize that the solution to overcrowded schools within the City of Rockville is not for us to battle our neighbors for a larger slice of the pie. The only real solution is for us all to work hard to obtain a *larger* pie – more school construction funds throughout the County.

In the upcoming County and State budget processes, please count on the City of Rockville – and please call upon us – to stand by your side as you work to accomplish our common goal of providing a first-rate education for our children.